



9 May 2007

### Death of a US Servicemember

1. Yesterday, we experienced the unexpected death of a U.S. Airman; a talented NCO six months into a year-long, unaccompanied tour; he was found dead in his dormitory room. The cause of his death is unknown at this time; however the loss of any life, whether a US Servicemember, a civilian employee, an invited contractor, or a family member is a tragedy.

2. This unfortunate situation is still under investigation. Without a doubt, people are our most valuable resource; it will take the Air Force over 12 years to grow an experienced NCO to replace this Servicemember. We may never know whether this death could have been prevented; however, it is important now to review some basic leadership, safety, and wellness issues.

- Commanders and leaders must stay involved; this is especially critical as we enter the 101 days of summer. Leaders must remind everyone to support each other. It is essential that the “battle buddy” and “combat wingman” concept is alive and well in every USFK formation. This is what taking care of each other is about. See our [USFK Policy Letter #6, Buddy System](#).

- Over 90% of our Servicemembers serve remote tours in Korea. Extended periods of separation can lead to depression, alcohol and substance abuse, and even suicide. Commanders and supervisors at all levels should review wellness issues and be alert to indicators. Unit chaplains are one of our most valuable resources on wellness issues. They should be known by all and called upon frequently to assist the command and individuals with wellness issues and to intervene in crisis situations.

- *Under the Oak Tree Counseling* policy concepts are time-tested and work. Be a leader and get involved with your people now. See [USFK Command Policy Letter #2, Command Safety](#). This applies to the Brigade, Group and Wing-level of command all the way down to squad and flight levels of leadership.

3. Whether you are a Servicemember, civilian employee, invited contractor, or family member — you are our most valuable resource. Each of us must take every precaution to assure our collective safety and well being. We need each and every one of you as we continue to work towards excellence.

We go together!

B. B. BELL  
General, US Army  
Commander

**FREEDOM'S FRONTIER!**

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